

Facilitating Communities in Demand Articulation for Quality Education

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Introduction

Education reforms¹ efforts in Pakistan, emanating from both governmental and non-governmental sectors, have traditionally been supply driven. In the absence of strong and sustained demands on political actors by communities for quality education, reform initiatives and interventions have failed to yield optimal results. Unlike other socio-economic problems such as drinking water, sanitation and transportation, education does not seem to be a collective issue around which communities organize. This assumption, borne out by the experience and observations of senior ESRA staff as well as some important commentators provided the rationale for the present study. The objectives of the study were:

- To assess the level of demand among communities for quality education;
- to find out factors that influence demand for quality education;
- to assess the extent and quality of demand articulation for quality education; and finally
- to propose a sustainable, replicable and cost-effective model for facilitating communities in articulating demands for quality education.

1. Methodology

The report is based on primary data generated through in-depth interviews with (a) ESRA & implementing partners' staff community members (b) politicians and elected representatives and (c) education officials. These interviews were conducted in two selected districts i.e. Hyderabad in Sindh and Naushki in Balochistan. Prior to going out in the field, we surveyed existing literature and relevant interventions to develop a framework for interviews. Separate semi-structured and open-ended questionnaires (see Annex 1) were used for the categories of respondents mentioned above.

1.1 Limitations

While every effort was made in the field to meet as many respondents as possible and pick up maximum level of in-depth information about relevant issues, the time available for the exercise was not sufficient. Particularly, when it comes to studying political behavior one requires time to build rapport with communities before they start opening up to outsiders.

The findings of the study might not be wholly valid for all the districts ESRA is working in as

¹ In line with ESRA's focus, this report primarily deals with public sector primary or basic education.

socio-political realities vary tremendously across the country.

2. Summary of Literature Review

While much of the literature on problems facing basic education in general and public sector education in particular touches upon the demand side of the education challenge, studies focusing solely on this aspect are few and far between. Additionally, the issue of low demand or inadequately articulated demand has not been problematized in a proper socio-political context. Furthermore, the demand-supply dichotomy often results in important inter-linkages being lost sight of (Gazdar 1999: 31). For instance, discussions on poor quality of education deal with technical aspects such as lack of trained staff but have very little to say about the potential role of communities including parents in ensuring quality. Similarly, while a lack of political commitment to universalize and improve primary education is brought up as a detrimental factor, a plausible connection it might have with an absence of public pressure on politicians is seldom taken into account (See for example, Haq 1998: 55).

Many studies have concluded that demand for quality education tends to be low in Pakistan because of ‘poverty, the opportunity cost of children’s time, out of pocket expenses, lack of information on the value of education, lack of information on the value of education’ etc. (Gazdar 1999: 30). According to a recent HRCP study, there is a low demand for education even where the cost of schooling is a small proportion of the total household expenditure ‘because of the long-term nature of returns for households struggling at subsistence level’. By contrast, a number of writers have pointed out to ever-increasing numbers of private schools across the country as a convincing sign of a high demand for education. Success of many community-based NGO initiatives has also been mentioned as an indication of parents’ willingness to educate their children² (Hoodbhoy 1999).

An SDPI study on the training and capacity building of School Management Committees (SMCs) provides an excellent overview of the conceptual issues underlying education as a case of participation and collective action (Khan & Zafar 1999: 24). What makes education complicated and unlike other social goods such as drinking water or sanitation is the fact that not all members of

² Gazdar (1999) stresses the need to distinguish between willingness and motivation. While the former indicates a lack of opposition to educating children, it ‘cannot be equated with active pursuit of schooling’. Some level of motivational work, Gazdar rightly points out, ‘is still necessary to convert passive willingness into active demand’.

a community are likely to benefit directly from it. That education is likely to pay dividends to a society as a whole in the longer run is a fact people do not generally acknowledge.

Recent efforts to decentralize education as part of the overall framework of devolution offer new opportunities for better educational planning and management with involvement of local communities (AKU-IED 2003:5). While endorsing the potential of devolution to improve education, a number of recent studies have concluded that the system as it exists now has failed to live up to initial expectations (HRCP 2005). In some districts distrust between elected representatives and government officials including those associated with education has marred the new system. Confusions exist in terms of budgetary matters, as it is not clear in some cases 'where and how the budget is distributed and how the funding is controlled and monitored' (HRCP 2004: 7). Many members of the district education staff are not aware of their own terms of reference. Doubts have also been raised about the management capacity of district governments (Winkler, 2002).

3. Intervention Mapping

Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF), a joint initiative by Oxfam, Action Aid and Save the Children (UK), recently helped establish a Pakistan Coalition for Education. With a national council and secretariat in Islamabad, provincial councils and district coordinators, the coalition aims to have a broad membership base including NGOs, media organizations and concerned individuals. According to its mission statement, the coalition aims at influencing 'policies and practices through research-based advocacy and mobilisation'. Although still in its infancy, the coalition could turn out to be a useful nationwide platform for demand articulation and political mobilization.

Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) is working with CEF on a project component which focuses on enabling local communities to monitor government spending on education at all levels of governance. The focus is on supporting and promoting mechanisms, which would empower communities to track government spending to ensure effective utilization of available resources and advocate for increase in education budgets, where required. HRCP has developed a manual on budget tracking and plans to develop technical skills to track budget allocations and spending at national, provincial and district levels.

In the context of demand articulation at district levels some forums put together by different NGOs

deserve mentioning. Strengthening Participatory Organization (SPO) has formed Civil Society Networks in several districts. Previously called Participatory Development Coalitions (PDCs), the networks bring together CBOs under a different priority area in each district. For example, the network in district Naushki does advocacy and awareness-raising around education. Efforts are being made to broaden the membership base of these networks by bringing in political parties and trade unions.

4. Analysis of Baseline Data

In this section we critically analyze qualitative data generated through field visits and interviews in two selected districts. Separate sections on Naushki and Hyderabad are followed by a synthesis incorporated into a model for facilitating communities in demand articulation.

Instead of separately discussing responses given by different sets of respondents, we present our analysis under two thematic areas that have relevance to the strategy that we propose in the next session. These include (a) demand for education among local communities & constraints on demand; and (b) potential for improving demand articulation. Analyzing the data within these categories allows us to elaborate challenges and opportunities within the framework of objectives listed in Section 1 (See Page 2) while using a multiplicity of perspectives.

5.1 District Naushki (Balochistan)

Naushki, which was until recently a *tehsil* of district Chagai, has now been designated a separate district. With a population of about 100,000, the district is predominantly rural with 76 % people living in rural areas³. The district is economically impoverished with a majority of people relying on agriculture and cattle grazing-most unreliable of trades in a largely arid region. A sizable percentage of population, especially in Naushki city, depends on cross-border smuggling of goods from Iran as a source of income. There are also a large number of people from the district working as labourers in Gulf countries. Remittances sent in by these overseas workers provide lifeline for many poor families. Ethnically, the district is predominantly Baloch with a small Afghan, local Pashto and Urdu speaking population.

While the district's literacy rate of 34 % leaves much to be desired, it is relatively higher than

³ 1998 District Census Report Chagai

adjoining areas⁴. There is a substantial gender disparity with female literacy rate being just 18 % compared with 47 % for men. However, gross enrollment rates for boys and girls do not show as big a gap as found in some other districts of Balochistan⁵. Major education problems identified in Chagai District Education Plan submitted to ESRA by SPO are listed in the following table. However, through in-depth interviews we hope to have problematized and probed deeper into these problems and identified new ones in our effort to propose a strategy for strengthening demand for quality education as we shall elaborate later in this section and the subsequent one.

Education Issues and Challenges Identified by District Education Plan

Supply Side	Demand Side
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teachers' quality and shortage (especially of female teachers) ▪ Need for more schools and improvement of existing infrastructure ▪ Supply of textbooks, education aids ▪ Establishment of system and procedures (for example, MIS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of motivation among parents ▪ Poverty as an impediment to enrolment ▪ Lack of demand for girls' education, due to certain socio-cultural norms

The Naushki city where we conducted our interviews is a little nondescript town with a bare minimum of civic infrastructure. Nonetheless, it's a politically vibrant city with a long standing tradition of radical nationalist politics. The city is a stronghold of Balochistan National Party (BNP), while other nationalist parties such as Jamhuri Watan Party (JWP) and Pakistan National Party (PNP-Bizinjo) also have a substantial presence. A large number of elected representatives at the local level are affiliated with BNP. However, many councilors are said to be handmaidens of one tribal leader or the other, who had them elected using their personal clout. Like many other districts in Pakistan, the relationship between elected representatives and local bureaucracy is marred by mutual distrust and accusations of undue interference and non-cooperation.

Despite a tradition of radical politics and pervasiveness of progressive political rhetoric, patron-client relationships still persist within the political system. The basic assumption behind this

⁴ Tehsil Dalbandin and Naukundi of Chagai district of which Naushki was a part have literacy rates of 19 % and 28 % respectively.

⁵ Gross enrolment rate for age group 5-10 is 56 per cent (59 % for boys and 54 % for girls).

relationship is that patron (tribal leader/elected representative/bureaucrat) has access to political and economic resources that the client needs. The means to gain access to these resources under a patron-client relationship is for the latter to adopt a posture of deference towards the former and/or appeal to and manipulate personal and kinship ties and codes of reciprocity (Davis 1977: 132). Such a relationship is strongly linked with the moral system of honor and shame. In return for access to resources, clients are obliged to honor the patron by political support or other offerings. Patrons usually emerge to control resources where the state fails to provide universal access to resources (Gellner 1977:4).

The religious right represented by Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) has some following in rural areas and so does Pakistan Peoples Party. The ruling Muslim League has made some political gains recently with a few leading tribal leaders joining the party. Naushki does not have a separate National Assembly seat. There is a combined Quetta-Chagai seat, which at present is held by JUI's Hafiz Hussain Ahmed. The MPA from the area, Shabbir Ahmed Badeli belongs to the Muslim League. Significantly, clerics or mosque imams have a ceremonious role confined to religious duties such as leading prayers and delivering sermons. Beyond that, they are said to have very little influence on basic social issues including education.

Among non-governmental actors, in addition to ESRA's implementing partners i.e. IDSP, SPO⁶ and Save the Children (US), UNFPA has a strong presence in the district. Apart from that, there are no major NGOs working in the district.

5.1.1 Demand for Education among Local Communities & Constraints on Demand

Most respondents were of the view that majority of people in Naushki district did have a willingness to educate their children. However, that willingness is yet to translate into strong motivation or active pursuit of schooling; there is a lack of responsibility on the part of parents in the sense that they do not take any interest in children's education beyond having them enrolled in schools. They seldom interact with teachers, discuss education with neighbors and friends or visit schools to see how their children are getting along. Staff of an ESRA implementing partner informed us that one major reason why they were finding it difficult to reactivate or put in place Parents Teachers School Management Committees (PTSMCs) in the district was the fact that

⁶ In addition to implementing ESRA's district education plan outsourced to it by SCF (US), SPO also spearheads a district Civil Society Network formerly called Participatory Development Network. Significantly, the network has education as its major thematic area and it comprises of major CBOs working in the district.

parents were not motivated enough to get actively involved in school affairs.

Parents whose children do not go to school or dropped out early cited ‘a lack of employment opportunities after schooling’ as a major reason why they were not keen on it. Some political activists and NGO workers held that socially irrelevant curricula and poor quality led many to get disillusioned with the education system to the point that they withdrew children from school.

Most councilors, Union Council Nazims and Tehsil Nazim interviewed observed that people did bring education problems to their notice. Mostly the issues had to do with infrastructural problems such as a lack of shelter or furniture in schools. Equally frequently people get in touch with elected representatives in the hope of getting a position as a teacher or support staff in a school. Echoing the belief that client-patron relationships are still strong in Naushki’s political economy, a number of education officials and NGO workers criticized people especially teachers’ union for influencing the system to get personal favors.

A Tehsil Naib Nazim said being an elected representative he had to try and help out people seeking jobs, transfers or other such favors. Some political representatives, it seems, see such relationships of patronage as a legitimate mode of political action. Responses from education officials and NGO workers point to the fact that politics of patronage also characterizes education bureaucracy; officials from the level of DCO, down to EDOs and field staff such as learning coordinators entertain the demands of ministers and local political elite in terms of teachers’ appointments, performance appraisals etc. in a bid to secure their own positions. Teachers unions in Naushki, it seems is a formidable force, that can work through the local client-patron politics as well as undercut it by way of collective action such as strikes and non-cooperation. The strength of teachers’ union points to the possibility of collective action even within a political economy of patronage provided there is an awareness of common interests transcending parochial identities and an institutional platform to converge on.

Demand for education seems strongest among political workers affiliated with nationalist parties and Naushki city’s small professional class, which includes local college lecturers, doctors, lawyers, NGO workers and some government employees. Education, some activists said was an integral part of ‘nationalist and progressive left wing struggle’. However, even among these groups there does not seem to be a clear understanding of how education could become an agenda for collective action. Additionally, there is some skepticism about private and social dividends

education could bring about. For instance, while a lawyer was all for universalizing education as a moral imperative, he echoed a general perception that education entails an opportunity cost that people cannot afford. Such skepticism and a lack of clarity and consensus about the value of education both as a moral imperative and as a means to better individual and collective lives is a serious hindrance in the way of effective demand articulation and collective action for education.

Interestingly, some councilors we met said they would like decisions to be taken on the basis of merit and fair treatment rather than personal or tribal relationships of reciprocity. The same point of view was echoed by a writer and an office bearer of Naushki's literary organization. Similarly, young political workers from different parties who do not hold any office in the elected government were passionately critical about the current state of interaction between people and elected representatives when it came to education. A political activist was of the view that elected representatives doled out favors here and there to appease potential voters but took little interest in resolving genuine issues. They also pointed out that district assembly hardly held any sessions, let alone seriously discussing education problems. Additionally, education got the lowest share among all major heads in the district budget.

NGO workers agreed with the claim that nationalist parties and their student wings raised education issues in seminars and political rallies. However, their campaigns are based more on sloganeering rather than solid facts and figures about the state of education in the district. Senior politicians and party leaderships, it was pointed out, remained preoccupied with questions of provincial autonomy and identity; they hardly ever speak about the state of education in the district and the province at large.

Some NGO workers severely criticized the education department for not maintaining and sharing education data, which could be used for advocacy and demand articulation. DO Education Naushki refuted the allegation only partially, saying that sometimes he had to withhold 'confidential data'. Systems based on patronage, it may be pointed out thrive on secrecy and mystification, hence we find a lack of interest and will among elected representatives and government officials to maintain and share information with activists and other community members.

5.1.2 Potential for Improving Demand Articulation

Drawing on the above discussion, we shall now highlight some windows of opportunities that are available for strengthening demand articulation for education in Naushki district. These points will

be elaborated further and incorporated into a model/strategy for facilitating communities in demand articulation.

- Although client-patron relationship is well-entrenched in local political economy including bureaucracy and popular politics, young generation including political activists, NGO workers, writers and lawyers are inclined more towards issue-based and ideological politics and collective action around public goods. The young leadership could be mobilized for forging out alternatives to current politics of patronage.
- Teachers union with its capacity to undercut client-patron relationships and initiate collective actions could be enlisted as an ally rather than a foe in the struggle for articulating demands for education improvement.
- Ordinary people and activists do agree that they have a right to access information and statistics about the state of education and that it could be used to hold elected representatives and officials accountable.
- There is a realization among local communities that if the system of local government fails to respond to popular demands, decentralization can be a missed opportunity.
- When invited into a rational discourse on the value of education, including long-term private and social returns it brings about, people do show a willingness to reconsider their skepticism about it.
- Although still in its infancy, SPO's Civil Society Network with education as its priority theme offers an opportunity to forge a broad platform for demand articulation for education.
- Political activists and NGO workers are keen to get training on information collection, advocacy and demand articulation.
- Drawing on polymorphic opinion leadership⁷, such as village elders, senior writers and seasoned politicians could help build a consensus among local communities for pursuing education as a collective agenda.

6. District Hyderabad (Sindh)

Hyderabad district is a vast fertile alluvial plane, excepting the hilly region of Hyderabad city,

⁷ As distinct from monomorphic opinion leadership whose influence is limited to one specific topic. Such leadership is typical of modern and highly industrialized societies with sophisticated division of labour. A village elder or seasoned politician, for example, may be consulted on a wide range of matters ranging from marriage problems to economic and educational issues.

extending along the east bank of the Indus. Cultivation is dependent on canal irrigation. It takes its name from the Hyderabad city, which has been the capital of Sindh for hundreds of years, before it was conquered by the British in 1843 and incorporated as a municipality in 1853.⁸ As the second largest city in Sindh and fifth largest in the country, Hyderabad has been the capital of Sindh province between 1947 to 1955 and is host to historical monuments, educational institutions and a seat of spiritual learning. Hyderabad is long noted for its craft industries, which include, embroideries, leather work, precious metals goods, cutlery, glass bangles, pottery, lacquered wood furniture, as well as an important commercial center for crops like millet, rice, wheat, cotton and fruits that are grown in the surrounding regions.

During the British period, many schools were established by leading *zamindars* and farmers for the educational uplift of the whole community, irrespective of religion or caste. The very first high school in Hyderabad city, Noor Muhammad High School was established by the financial grant of Seth Noor Muhammad in 1858, is not an exception but a social norm that speaks volumes for the philanthropic commitments of the community (Qamar, 2000:16).

The total area of District Hyderabad (before its break up in April 2005) is 5519 kilometers, with a population of 2.89 millions in 1998. The district is divided into eight *tehsils* (Taluka) which include, city Hyderabad, Latifabad, Qasimabad, Taluka Hyderabad, Matiari, Hala, Tando Muhammad Khan, and Tando Allah Yar. There are a total of 102 union councils, with uneven size of population. The most densely populated union council is Latifabad with 19.50 % in contrast to scarcely populated Qasimabad with 4.0 % of total population (Hyderabad DEP: 2004/5).

Pakistan People's Party, (PPP) has large following in the rural and urban areas of the district and Mutahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) have been able to control the vote banks in the urban areas. Mutahida Majlis Amal (MMA), has an active presence in the district, although without much electoral strength. The ruling Muslim League (Q) has also created a clout among the politicians and voters. There are six National Assembly seats and twelve provincial assembly seats in the district.

District Nazim Makhdoom Rafiq-uz-Zaman is from Pakistan Peoples Party. The MPA from the area, Farheen Mughal belongs to the PPP. The social and political ethos of the district Hyderabad is tribal and ethno linguistic. Various locations in the Hyderabad city are divided into ethnic and tribal

⁸Ghulam Ali Kalhora made Hyderabad the capital of Sindh in 1768 AD.

regions, which by and large correspond to the electoral constituencies from which the pool of local bodies representatives are drawn. However, the rural areas of the district are predominantly ethnically Sindhi speaking. The leading tribes of the district include Sumorros, Jatois, Lagharis among others.

Literacy rate in Sindh is highest in the country at 51 %, and the literacy rate of district Hyderabad is 44.25 % according to the 1998 census (against 28.66 % in 1981). The gender disparity in education is high as male literacy ratio is 52.63 % and female literacy ratio is 34.97 % in 1998. The total number of students enrolled in primary education is 236,072 that include 145,624 boys and 90,448 girls. However, the total number of students enrolled for Middle Schools is 45,403, which reveals a very high drop out rate from the schools. 'Over the decade of the 1990s, the performance of Sindh has been the poorest among all provinces. GPER in Sindh rose from 65 percent in 1993 to 70 % in 1996 and then declined to 64 % in the year 2000' (SPDC: 2002).

According to Hyderabad District Education Plan 2003/2004, given the fact that reliable data about the private schools is not available, it is estimated that 'private sector is undertaking a major load of demand by provision of more appropriate facilities for educational at all levels of the spectrum'. The percentage of students enrolled in private sector is estimated to be 42 % of the total in equivalent levels in the public schools in the district.

School Management Committees (SMC), which are meant to represent the smallest unit of educational administrations were created by the Sindh government, for which Bureau of Curriculum and Extension Work (BCEW) was entrusted the task in 1994, along with Sindh Education Foundation, DPE and NGOs. A total of 7,500 SMC/PTA were reported to be functioning by 1999. However, the current statistics on the SMC with operational bank accounts are not available.

Specific interventions to improve the quality and access of education in district Hyderabad include, the following:

- Whole District Initiative (WDI) under the US Aid funded ESRA program takes a holistic view of the educational panorama by developing and implementing a district level educational development program with an active support and participation of local communities.
- Sindh Reforms Program, which aims to enhance non-salary funds from World Bank

supported Structural Adjustment Credit (SAC)

- District Elementary Education Program (DEEP), supported by the Asian Development Bank
- Khushaal Pakistan Program, a government supported program for the development of physical infrastructure especially in rural areas and low-income urban areas. The program has also focused on construction of various schemes for the repair and operationalisation of public schools
- Sindh Education Foundation (SEF) is a government organization that was created in 1992 to promote and develop education in Sindh. It takes a broader view of education and runs programs for working children, adult and women education in addition to providing technical support to multi-sectoral educational programs.

6.1.1 Demand for Education among Local Communities & Constraints on Demand

A large majority of community members, especially those who cannot afford to send their children to private schools, did demonstrate a firm commitment towards public education; however, the resources necessary to realize these commitments into procedures for enhancing the quality of education have been found lacking within the public education system. A case in point is the land grants from the rural communities for the establishment of schools in the villages, which *Paiman*, an NGO working in district Hyderabad has been able to elicit from the rural communities in large number.

In contrast to the Upper Sindh, where feudal rent seeking behavior is more dominant in the vast rural enclaves and the scarcely populated cities, the Hyderabad district, being a thriving commercial and central administrative center in lower Sindh has a higher urban population density and matching ratio of rural and urban areas with 1,422,387 sq km of rural and 1,469,101 sq km of urban land. As a result, social attitudes of a large majority of population are favorably predisposed towards education of both boys and girls. Even the proverbial feudal attitudes towards female education are moderated by a moral and spiritual consensus on the usefulness of education for all, irrespective of gender. Moreover, the arguments that consider the cost of returns on female education are lower than a boy, are questioned by the members of rural communities by referring to the Holy Prophet's emphasis on education of the women, which will prove beneficial to the entire family. An illiterate peasant, in the village Shah Bukhari, UC Qasimabad who was interviewed, made a crisp observation that how come a mother can help a child to learn his school lessons, if she is not herself educated. The fact that 'contrary to perceptions of feudal culture a robust tradition exists in Hyderabad of co-education' (Hyderabad, DEP: 2004/5)

Despite a favorable climate for the spread of mass literacy, Sher Muhammad Khurram Laghari, UC Nazim II, Qasimabad placed the demand articulation for the education by the communities at the tail end especially in the absence of infrastructure like roads, drainage, sanitation, water supply, and electricity in the rural areas. However, the comparative level of improved infrastructure, allows urban councilors, to be more responsive to the needs for quality education than their counterparts in the rural areas.

District Education Officer, Mr Abdul Majeed Hur emphasized the role of teacher as a community mobilizer as well as a role model for demonstrating the benefits of education to the communities, which has deteriorated over the years, largely due to the frequent interference from the ruling elite and political elite in the decisions for appointments, postings and transfer of teachers. Inadequate training and infrequent opportunities for on the job training of teachers has also added to the decline in the quality of professional standards of school education thereby making public sector education unattractive for the upwardly mobile population. Teacher's Union also poses a threat to the transparency of the educational administration at the provincial as well district levels, which also puts a dampener on the community's potentials for participation in the demand articulation for quality education.

The role of SMC in de-centralized administration of the school and their usefulness for developing and monitoring school administration has been borne out by field experience; however, they are ill equipped for several reasons to ensure participation of the maximum number of stakeholders in demand articulation of public education. SMC are too exclusive in their membership to mobilize all those multiple stakeholders who have hidden benefits in the continuation of the school. The idea of stakeholders of education needs to be more inclusive than exclusive. The stakeholders of education should not be considered only those who are direct beneficiaries but also those who draw indirect benefits from the public education. The composition of SMC/PTAs should be broadened as well as power imbalance between parents on the one hand and teachers, UC members, local notable s on the other should be addressed. Different categories of indirect beneficiaries as well as opinion leaders, social activists, philanthropist individuals should be included to enable the communities to articulate their demands for education at various levels of political stratification.

The existing capacity of the communities for articulating their demands is compromised by a number of factors, including the poverty factor. Majority of the parents of the children in public

schools in Hyderabad don't have the means to spare from work and raise collective voice against the decline in the quality of education. As Khan *Teal* (1999) argued, over the years the private and non-government schools have proliferated even in the rural areas and there is an 'exodus of richer children' from the public schools. 'The growth of enrollments in non-government schools increased by 131 per cent for girls and 61 % for boys between 1991 and 1995-96' in the country. Since rich parents are more likely to be vocal and play a principal role in maintaining the standards of education, their exodus from the government schools have compromised the ability of the communities to build a sustained pressure on the district government for improving the quality of education. The flip side of private sector schooling is that the increased enrollment of the students in the private schools, which caters for at least 30 % of the student population in schools in district Hyderabad, undercut the ability of the communities to perceive education as a public good, which is a pre-requisite to motivate individual and groups for a remedial collective action.

Second, given the history of centralized governance by the state, the communities have developed a certain kind of apathy towards the functions, processes and outcomes of the governance in the country. Public action is anchored in a system of patron and client relations, where the support of patron is sought for irrespective of the merits of the case. The existing patterns of demands articulation by the local communities for education in district Hyderabad, therefore, are part of a system of political patronage, where rewards are distributed on the basis of personal discretion of the patron vis-à-vis the personal loyalty of the individual client. From teacher's appointments to their transfer and postings, from the school setting to the supervision and monitoring of the school management, the merits of a demand are rarely debated on the basis of objective assessment of a particular case. As borne out by the field visit and interviews, the local politics has become a microcosm or a variant of the elite politics, which divides the communities and weakens the political force of collective action from its very root.

Third, along with the centralized bureaucratic structures of state, the fractured democratic and electoral process in the country has weakened the prospects and demands for a collective public action. A large number of stakeholders in education, be they community members, employees of education department, union councilors, or NGOs expressed a general skepticism for working through the formal channels of the state. The lack of confidence of the stakeholders on the efficacy of public action through community mobilization stems from the public experience of battling against the authoritarian state and its representatives, which has been unresponsive to the demand articulation of the communities. The current reforms in the governance regime of the province and

the country has created a ‘novelty effect’, which has stimulated the communities and given them a hope for building up and mobilizing their resources for a better educational future, provided they are facilitated through external inputs for a head start.

Finally, public education has been perceived as the sole responsibility of the state, and the concept of community participation in creating a demand for the quality education is a new concept for the political representatives, education department as well as for the local communities. As a result, the stakeholders in the education sector, especially the communities may not always have the required skills and resources either to participate in the decentralized policy planning and administration of the schools or to launch effective advocacy campaigns for the increase in budgetary allocation for the public education. The capacity building of the local communities as well district administration for articulating and affecting the demands for quality education is imperative.

6.1.2 Potentials for Improving Demand Articulation

The fieldwork helped to crystallize a number of potential means, largely identified by the respondents for improving the demand articulation, which includes the following:

- In district Hyderabad, not only that community’s are responsive to the need of education for their children in rural as well urban areas but also there had been a tradition of charitable interests in education by the landed as well economic elite. Given that, there is a potential for creating a groundswell of opinion and interest on the demand articulation for quality education in the district by drawing on the philanthropic potentials of the communities.
- A potential for using SMC as a local forum for demand articulation is enormous, provided each SMC is created through community mobilization, rather than a governmental decree and communities are given technical and skill based advocacy training. As corroborated by field experience, the community ownership of SMC develops its roots provided SMC members are given discretion to elect their members and more powers are given to them. A coalition of empowered SMC at district level can enable the communities to articulate their demands for quality education at higher tiers of district administration.
- In district Hyderabad, the radio broadcast has considerable outreach in the rural areas and response from the communities to the broadcast is overwhelming, according to Naseer Mirza, Program Manager, FM, Radio Pakistan, Hyderabad. Radio broadcast as an indirect medium to raise

awareness about the importance of education is currently being used as a part of national media policy. However, its specialized use as an organ of community mobilization is yet to be explored and the opportunities for interacting with local communities through broadcast have been under utilized.

- Literary organizations, social activists, journalists, and notable intellectuals, as indirect beneficiaries of education have the potential to get involved in the demand articulation, which can be strengthened by improving their access to information on education.

7. Proposed Model for Facilitating Communities in Demand Articulation

Drawing on common findings of the field work in district Naushki and Hyderabad, we shall now sketch out a model aimed at facilitating local communities in articulating demands for education as a collective issue and a public good. In elaborating various components of the proposed model, we also take into account specific and sometimes divergent realities of the two districts to ensure that the model is implemented in a context-sensitive manner. We would recommend that the model be piloted in the two selected districts. The model should be replicated in the light of monitoring and review findings coming out of the pilot phase as well as baseline studies conducted in other districts.

The politics of patronage that has disabled a freedom of public action cut across state institutions, political governments, and the ruling elite. Raising awareness for public education is half the job. The other half is to be able to translate social awareness into collective actions for demand articulation. To enable the scattered hapless mass of people transform into organized social groups that can articulate their demands for education as a public good, the capacity of the communities needs to be built, which can allow them to turn their individual desires into collective actions. If the education sector reforms are to survive beyond the ESRA project, then technical and managerial capacities of the communities needs to be strengthened that can enable them to create well-coordinated collective demands for education in the public sphere.

In terms of overarching guiding principles, facilitating demand articulation by communities would require turning passive willingness among parents and others in the community to educate children into an active and informed pursuit of improving the system; undercutting existing client-patron relationships that disenfranchise and disarticulate people to pave the way for issue-based collective action; and ensuring that such collective action is participatory, cost effective, sustainable and

result-oriented. It is these broad principles that provide a conceptual anchor to various components of the model elaborated below.

7.1 Creating a Moral & Political Consensus on a Minimum Common Agenda

Political action and decisions based on client-patron relationships and parochial interests are a major obstacle not only to the improvement and expansion of public sector education, they also tend to thwart collective action and demand articulation. Consequently, education as a collective issue gets pushed off to the fringes of political agenda, while the system is rendered hostage to personalized and parochial interests. A lack of information about the state of education further impedes any collective action to hold the system accountable.

Since politicians never approve of politics of patronage if carried out by opponents and since they all pay lip service to the value of education, accountability and transparency, a well-planned mediation bringing political leadership of all political parties as well as representatives of teachers' unions and other civil society leadership could help forge a consensus on a set of core principles that appeal to common sense and widely shared moral beliefs. In principle, any political actor would find it difficult not to accept in public that (a) Governance and public sector management including that of education should be based on merit, transparency and fairness; and (b) People, irrespective of their political persuasion should have a right to access information.

It may be argued that a public endorsement of these principles would not necessarily translate into politicians and other actors such as teachers' unions and bureaucrats turning into epitomes of integrity. However, by accepting certain rules of the game so to speak, they would acquire and hand over to their opponents and counterparts a standard to judge behavior and performance against.

Thus, as the first step in this model we would recommend that ESRA with the support of an implementing partner-for example SPO's Civil Society Network-engages opinion leaders to meet important political actors in each selected district to secure their support on a minimum common agenda described above. Once sufficient numbers of actors and leaders have shown willingness to accept such agenda publicly they should be invited to a dialogue where that agenda would be reiterated and presented in the form of a joint declaration.

7.2 Motivating Communities to Articulate Demands

Broad-based and participatory demand articulation would require motivation across entire

communities and not just social and political leadership. At present, such motivation is found lacking largely because of (a) Politics of patronage and concomitant lack of trust in procedures and institutions (b) Skepticism about the value of education to a household and a community.

To address above constraints, it is recommended that local community mobilizers from a partner organization hold face-to-face meetings⁹ with community elders, parents including those on SMCs, councilors etc. in every union council¹⁰ of pilot districts. Just like the proposed dialogue among politicians, bureaucrats and civil society leadership (**Section 7.1**) these sessions would drive home the need for undercutting patron-client relationships within the education sector. A joint declaration signed/endorsed by leading politicians as a result of the activity proposed in Section 7.1 could also be used as a message to communities that education should not be held hostage to personal and parochial interests. This message should be a part of a rational discourse on education aimed at motivating communities to initiate collective action for education. Motivation, we shall contend, does not come about through sermonizing or empty slogans, which have been a hallmark of public information and mobilization campaigns in this country. People have to be engaged in a rational discourse; they must be provided with solid arguments on why they should be a part of a collective action for education.

Some topics for discussion in such sessions could include: how each year of education brings additional returns for wage earners (Nasir and Nazli 2000); how education enhances the potential of the self-employed people; and how it enhances productivity and growth besides contributing to a reduction of poverty. Some simple tools such as district rankings and micro case studies from other countries could be used to convince people that education does accrue social and economic dividends. People should also be informed that the problem of education cannot be addressed by simply raising outlays; ensuring effectiveness and efficiency of these expenditures is equally important (HRCP 2004: 6).

These meetings should also help do some groundwork for training in procedural engagement and

⁹ Research on communication effects has convincingly established that interpersonal channels are far more useful in changing attitudes than mass media (Hill & Watson 2000: 89).

¹⁰ The number of meetings per union council would depend on the size and density of population. We would advise against a standard formula and suggest that efforts should be made to cover as much of population as time and resources allow.

collective action (See 7.3 below). Community members in each meeting should be taken into confidence about the purpose of these trainings. Those interested should be registered on the spot and asked to spread a word around about the whole initiative.

7.3 Training in Procedural Engagement and Demand Articulation

With correct and timely information about the state of education, knowledge of rules and procedures for demand articulation and citizens' participation in the system, and the capacity to use these rules and procedures, citizens could effectively influence the system. Such a form of activism would ensure that the system and reforms process are not derailed while citizens demand change and improvements.

Once political and community mobilization activities proposed earlier in this section have been completed successfully, the next step in the model would be to train communities in procedural engagement and *informed* demand articulation. The trainings should be held at Union Council and in case of larger districts at village level to enable maximum participation bringing together political activists from each political party having presence in the district, NGO and CBO activists, teachers¹¹ and ordinary community members including SMC members. The training module should have the following components:

- A discussion on education as a public good with potential economic and social returns
- A discussion on the need for transparency, accountability and merit-based (as opposed to parochial) decisions in public sector education

The above components would help set the tone for more interactive sessions designed to build knowledge and skills for demand articulation through procedural engagement. These would include:

- *Provisions Governing Education & Citizens' Participation in the Local Government System:* The session should impart information on the roles of provincial and district governments and education officials under the local government system. It would also

¹¹ Not only because of their pivotal role in the education system but also because of the influence of teachers unions, teachers must be brought on board and made to feel they are a part of the community and its collective actions.

include discussion on specific skills such as how to ask for a specific piece of information, say about the transfer of teachers or budgetary allocation for a school or Union Council, quoting the relevant section of the Local Government Ordinance. HRCP's manual on tracking budgets could also be adapted and used under this component.

- *Obtaining Information about Education:* The session should aim at demystifying EMIS and giving an orientation on what kinds of information are needed to assess the state of education in a district; for example teacher-pupil ratio; gender disaggregated data on enrolment and retention etc. Trainees should also be imparted some basic techniques for participatory data collection such as social mapping with which they could assess education needs in a particular village or union council before putting demands across to the government.
- *How to Use Information for Demand Articulation:* Information obtained through elected representatives and government officials by using relevant rules and provisions as well as primary data generated through PRA methods have to be used for articulating demands for improvements. Some campaigning techniques such as writing forceful letters or making phone calls to relevant people in the elected government and bureaucracy would go a long way in helping people use information effectively.
- *Developing Participatory Action Plans and Electing/Selecting Focal Persons:* To be meaningful and result oriented such trainings have to make sure that knowledge and skills imparted are actually put into practice. Each training session should close with participants developing a participatory action plan listing activities the group would undertake over the next three months. Focal persons should be elected or selected to coordinate these activities and have a liaison with ESRA/ implanting partner.

7.4 Using Local Cultural Resources

The philanthropic potentials of the community leaders can be developed into a cultural resource by carefully avoiding the free rider's problem and using their influence and charitable interest in education for strengthening the demand articulation of public education. The role of school teacher as a community leader and a role model for an illiterate society can be partially and indirectly be restored by giving an honest and hardworking teacher his social respect and granting the profession of teaching a moral value in society.

Alumni of primary schools, especially those who have been able to earn a career for themselves, can be turned into a local cultural resource that can be mobilized for strengthening demand articulation for education. Interactive street theatres is also a technique to develop cultural resources for community mobilization that can draw on the rich literate tradition of South Asian poetry, literature and drama to play out a rational discourse on education through role performance.

7.5 Using Radio

Radio broadcast has an overwhelming response from the communities, especially in the rural areas, where other mass media has a restricted access and circulation. Vital information on the district educational profile should be broadcast on regular basis and stories of hardworking and honest teachers, successful students and schools should be publicized as widely as possible for emulation. In addition, info entertainment based programs like drama, discussion forums to education news bulletins, and other expressive formats should be designed by NGOs and CBOs to generate a rational discourse and spread their message to the communities, which may otherwise lack the required educational exposure.

7.6 Linkages at the Provincial Level

Given that many important decisions about public sector education are still undertaken at the provincial level and that politics of patronage that affects education at all levels often emanates from provincial capitals (party chiefs and ministers instructing lower level officials to do their bidding) it is important that efforts for improving demand articulating at the district level are linked up at provincial capitals. A political and moral consensus (See Section 7.1) at the provincial level would not only help undercut parochial politics at the provincial level, it would also send out a positive signal to politicians, teachers unions and other actors at the district and lower levels. ESRA could work with Pakistan Coalition for Education at the provincial level to help forge a consensus on a minimum common agenda viz. (a) Governance and public sector management including that of education should be based on merit, transparency and fairness; and (b) People, irrespective of their political persuasion should have a right to access information.

Additionally, following activities could be undertaken at the provincial level to support demand articulation:

- Keeping a liaison with MPAs elected from the districts where the proposed demand articulation model is implemented and other districts where ESRA has a presence.

Providing them information alerts on problems identified by local communities.

- Facilitating community representatives from selected districts to meet up with MPAs, Education Minister and other relevant officials.
- Feeding MPAs with issues identified at the district level that need to be raised during Question & Answer Sessions in the Provincial Assembly.

9. Recommendations on the Role of ESRA District and Provincial Coordinators in Implementing and Monitoring the Model.

There exists a vertical and hierarchical relationship between the ESRA district coordinators and the local communities, including schoolteachers, which threatens to erode the spirit and purpose of community participation in demand articulation. The decentralized policy, management, and implementation in education sector will not take root in the communities, if the entire package of decentralization is made to appear as donor driven rather than demand driven. Holding SMC training programs in elite hotels, instead of using school premises, makes the entire exercise susceptible to the social and economic stratification that has disenfranchised the public action. The data generated through PRA techniques from the primary school teachers in the rural areas also points to the nature of interaction and role of various institutions in the demand articulation of education. Despite substantial investments made by ESRA in providing school children books, bags, bottles along with other educational material, one school teacher did not even mentioned ESRA as a separate institution from other ‘NGOs’ operating in the area. (See Appendix X for an example of social maps drawn by rural school teachers). The hierarchical relations between the community mobilizer and the community filters down even to the NGO *Paiman* sponsored by ESRA, as it has printed several publicity posters for educating the local communities in English language. Instead of dumping resources in the schools, the communities of parents and teachers should be sufficiently mobilized as to the objectives of external input as well as community’s role in maintaining and developing resources. Co-authorship of reforms, as envisaged by RTI will certainly require more intelligence, flexibility and humility especially from those pushing for reforms.

The above criticism should be read as a preamble to the implementation of the proposed model, where ESRA should maintain a lower profile and allow the communities to take the lead. Equally important would be a flexible and open attitude rather than thrusting people and phenomena into tight slots of definition. Stereotyping is widespread because its convenient-teachers’ unions are like this, politicians are like that, parents are like this and so on. Such attitudes not only blind one

to diversities within various groups and classes, it also precludes opportunities for tapping potential partners and allies. Also, rather than romanticizing communities as an ethical and cultural homogeneity, there is a need to be aware of vertical and horizontal divisions within them. Community participation would be meaningful only when class and gender disparities within communities are taken account of and everybody given a fair chance to participate, not just the most visible and vocal ones.

In reaching out to partners and communities at large, ESRA staff would need to guard against semantic and psychological barriers to communication. For instance, elitist venues, unnecessary technical gadgets, jargon, foreign language, official versions of history and symbols of a homogenous nation that attempt to subsume distinct ethnic and regional identities should be avoided.

Monitoring

Advocacy, community mobilization and demand articulation programs fail to yield expected results unless such interventions are systematically monitored and reviewed with adjustments and improvements made in time. This baseline study could be used to look at those characteristics of the environment that the program hopes to change¹². A study of the same characteristics after the model has been in operation for sometime could be conducted to see whether there has been any change.

A monitoring system including indicators, collection of data for the indicators and the analysis of data must be put in place. Both process and impact monitoring would be necessary to measure progress against objectives. In the context of the proposed model, a process indicator could be the number of politicians who have openly endorsed the idea of a freedom of information and merit-based decisions in public sector education. Another process indicator might be the number of times local groups or an umbrella network have met Nazim to discuss education problems. Corresponding qualitative indicators could be who represented the community in the meetings, who dominated the discussion, what issues were discussed etc. An impact indicator might be what, if any, decisions were taken after these meetings and how decisions were put into action. An indicator for monitoring both process and impact would be to see how much political activists and NGO workers remember from their training say four months later, and whether it has affected their advocacy and

¹² Some of these characteristics could be a lack of motivating for articulating collective demands for education, low priority given to education in political agendas, low demand for information on the state of education etc.

community mobilization work.

Regular in-depth reviews should be carried out as part of the monitoring system to assess the effectiveness of the model, to identify constraints and to decide whether and how it should be expanded or replicated.

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ANNEX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE

Questions for ESRA and implementing partners' staff:

- What priority does local community generally give to basic education compared to other priorities such as health, sanitation and infrastructure?
- What are the main reasons for education being relatively low on priority?
- What needs to be done to catalyze collective action for pressurizing elected representatives/politicians to improve primary education?
- What are the major sources of information for people in the district?
- Who are the opinion leaders?
- How sensitive are elected representatives to the importance of basic education?
- What existing forums/channels could be utilized to facilitate a sustained interaction between the community and elected representatives for education?
- What role can ESRA and implementing partners play in this regard?
- What role does local teacher union play? What kind of issues it takes action on and how?

Questions for Community Members:

- How important do you think basic education is compared to health, sanitation and infrastructure development?
- What are the reasons for education being so low on political agenda? Why doesn't basic education figure in electoral/political campaigns?
- What basis do you cast your vote on? Community/kinship ties or social/economic issues
- If social/economic issues, which ones?
- How often do you interact with local politicians and elected representatives and through which channels?
- What information do you have about the state of education in your area?
- Who would you contact if you needed additional information?
- Who would you consult to make important decisions about your children's future/career?
- Are you aware of the existence of SMCs?
- How well do you understand the role of the local government in education?
- Have you spoken to an elected representative about education in the past one year?
- Whose opinion in your community do you respect and value most?
- Do you think there is a need for the local community to get organized for pressuring local government for improving the state of education in your area?
- Are you willing to be a part of such a campaign?
- Who amongst you do you think can play a lead role in such a campaign?
- What support would you require in this regard?

Questions for District Nazim, UC Nazim/Naib Nazim, councilors:

- As an elected representative what is your top most priority for the district/local constituency?

- Why does education feature so low in electoral campaigns, party manifestoes etc.
- What challenges do you face in improving the provision of basic education in your district?
- How often do local community members interact with you and through which channel?
- Do they discuss problems related to education in the district? Do they bring up personal problems or collective ones?
- What support would you require from the community to help you improve the status of education?
- How often do you interact with your political opponents? Where? How?

Questions for EDO Education & EDO Literacy:

- What priority does local community generally give to basic education compared to other priorities such as health, sanitation and infrastructure?
- What are the main reasons for education being relatively low on priority?
- What needs to be done to catalyze collective action for pressurizing elected representatives/politicians to improve primary education?
- What potential exists for creating a coalition/alliance of SMCs for demand articulation?
- What are the major sources of information for people in the district?
- Who are the opinion leaders?
- How intrusive politicians are in your work?
- What issues do you get political pressure on?
- How sensitive are elected representatives to the importance of basic education?
- What existing forums/channels could be utilized to facilitate a sustained interaction between the community and elected representatives for education?
- What role can you and your departmental colleagues play in this regard?

LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Naushki

- Abid Rizvi, Member Board of Governors SPO & Taraqee Trust
- Akbar Durrani, Provincial Coordinator, ESRA
- Amajd Rasheed, Chief Executive, Taraqee Trust, Quetta
- Ataul Haq, Chief Administrator, Brilliant Academy, Nautical
- Atiq Baloch, Project Officer, SPO, Naushki
- Aziz Mengal, UC Nazim, Naushki
- Babu Abdur Raheem Mengal, District Nazim, Naushki
- Barkat Baloch, School Teacher, Naushki
- Farooq Baloch, District Coordinator, Balochistan National Party (BNP)
- Farooq Magsi, District Coordinator SPO, Naushki
- Gul Mohammad, District Coordinator ESRA, Naushki
- Hameed Baloch alias Hameed Red, In-charge Gul Khan Naseer Library, Naushki
- Iqbal Mengal, Asst. Project Officer UNFPA, Naushki
- Jamaldeeni Barech, Tehsil Naib Nazim, Naushki
- Khair Baksh, Member Central Executive Committee, Baloch Students Organization
- Lal Jan, Local Trader, Naushki
- Mukhtiar Jagirani, Senior Program Manager SPO, Quetta
- Nizam Baloch, local driver, father of school-going children, Naushki
- Nauroze Khan, Advocate, Naushki
- Nazeer Ahmed, Councilor, Naushki
- Nazir Baloch, UC Nazim, Naushki
- Qazi Salahuddin, District Coordinator IDSP, Naushki
- Raheemulah Jan Kakar, DCO, Naushki
- Saeed Baloch, Correspondent Jang & GEO, Naushki
- Sattar Shahvani, District Population Officer, Naushki
- Suleman Qazi, Project Officer UNFPA, Naushki
- Zafar Zeeshan, Provincial Chief, SPO, Quetta

Hyderabad

- Aamir Latif Siddiqui, District Coordinator, ESRAP, Hyderabad
- Abdual Majeed Hur, EDO, Hyderabad
- Majid Karim, District Officer Education (Elementary)
- Amjid Laghari, Deputy District Officer
- Farheen Mughal, ED, Paiman/ MPA Sindh Assembly
- Altaf Nizamani, Program Manager, Sindh Education Foundation.
- Naseem Mirza, Program Manager (FM 101), Radio, Hyderabad
- Khurram Laghari, UC II Nazim, Qasimabad
- Sher Muhammad, UC I Nazim, Hala
- Muhammad Imtiaz, UC Nazim, Hyderabad city
- Syed Muhammad Taqi, Senior Head Master, Shah Bukhari , UC Qasimabad
- Akram Mirani, Government Primary School Master, Shah Bukhari , UC Qasimabad
- Majid Qureshi, Government Secondary School Master, Shah Bukhari , UC Qasimabad
- Aslam Burgri, Government Primary School Master, Shah Bukhari, UC Qasimabad
- Dr A H Siddique, Retired Education Officer and local scholar
- Abid Hussain, local literary figure
- Ghous Muhammad, Parent of student, Shah Bukhari, UC Qasimabad
- Altaf Jatio, Parent of student, Shah Bukhari, UC Qasimabad
- Ayub Miran, Munshi and parent of a working child, Shah Bukhari, UC Qasimabad
- Qudsia Majeed, female student, Government Primary School, Shah Bukhari, UC Qasimabad
- Quyum Somoro, male student, Government Primary School, Shah Bukhari, UC Qasimabad
- Naseer Jogi, Government Primary School Master, Muhammad Khan Burgari, UC Qasimabad
- Akram Burgari, Government Primary School Master, Muhammad Khan Burgari, UC Qasimabad